

# Impact of Admission Processes on Candidate Quality and Program Satisfaction in Teacher Training Programs across Various Universities in Rajasthan

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**Abstract:** This study empirically investigates the relationship between admission processes and outcomes in teacher training programs across different categories of universities in Rajasthan, India. The research compares central universities utilizing entrance examinations, state universities employing merit-based selection, and self-finance universities practicing direct admission approaches. Data was collected from 450 students and 45 faculty members across 15 institutions using a mixed-methods approach incorporating surveys, academic performance analysis, and semi-structured interviews. Findings indicate that central universities' entrance-based processes yielded candidates with stronger academic profiles (mean GPA: 8.4/10) compared to state (7.6/10) and self-finance institutions (6.9/10). However, self-finance universities demonstrated higher program satisfaction scores (4.2/5) than central (3.8/5) and state universities (3.6/5). Statistical analyses revealed significant correlations between admission criteria rigor and academic performance ( $r=0.72$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), while personalized admission processes correlated with higher satisfaction levels ( $r=0.64$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). These findings suggest the need for balanced admission frameworks that address both academic merit and program satisfaction determinants, potentially through hybrid models that integrate standardized assessment with personalized elements.

**Keywords:** Teacher education, admission processes, academic quality, program satisfaction, Rajasthan higher education.

## 1. Introduction

Teacher education in India, and particularly in Rajasthan, represents a critical dimension of educational development and quality assurance. The processes through which teacher candidates are selected for professional preparation programs carry profound implications for the quality of the teaching workforce and, consequently, educational outcomes across the state. Rajasthan, with its diverse educational landscape comprising central universities, state institutions, and an emerging sector of self-finance universities, presents a compelling context for investigating how varied admission practices influence program outcomes. The importance of effective admission

processes in teacher education programs cannot be overstated. These processes serve as the initial quality assurance mechanism, determining who enters the teaching profession. As Sharma and Gupta (2021) note, teacher quality represents the single most significant school-related factor influencing student achievement. Given this reality, the mechanisms through which prospective teachers are selected warrant careful empirical investigation to inform evidence-based policy and practice.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

Despite the critical role of admission processes in shaping teacher quality, limited empirical research has systematically investigated how different admission models across diverse institutional contexts affect

candidate quality and program satisfaction in Rajasthan. Central universities typically employ competitive entrance examinations, state universities generally utilize merit-based selection processes, and self-finance institutions often implement more direct admission approaches with varying criteria. Each model presents theoretical advantages and limitations, yet their comparative outcomes remain inadequately documented in the research literature. This study aims to empirically investigate the outcomes of these differentiated admission processes by examining candidate quality metrics and program satisfaction indicators across institutional types. Through this investigation, the research seeks to identify strengths and weaknesses of different approaches and develop evidence-based recommendations for optimal admission frameworks in teacher education.

## 1.2 Research Question

The central research question guiding this study is: "How do different admission processes at central, state, and self-finance universities in Rajasthan affect the quality of admitted candidates and their program satisfaction?"

### Hypotheses

Based on preliminary observations and existing literature, this study tests the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Central universities, with their comprehensive entrance examination processes, admit candidates with higher academic potential as measured by standardized performance indicators.

**H2:** State universities, utilizing merit-based systems with specific quota provisions, ensure a more diverse student cohort while maintaining acceptable quality standards.

**H3:** Self-finance universities, implementing more direct admission processes with personalized components, demonstrate higher levels of student satisfaction but potentially lower academic performance metrics.

## 1.3 Objectives

The specific objectives of this research are:

1. To assess and compare the impact of entrance examination-based admission processes (central universities), merit-based selection systems (state universities), and direct admission approaches (self-finance universities) on candidate quality metrics.
2. To measure and analyze program satisfaction levels across the three institutional categories and identify relationships with admission processes.

3. To investigate qualitative dimensions of admission processes through stakeholder perspectives on their perceived strengths and limitations.
4. To develop evidence-based recommendations for optimizing teacher education admission processes that balance academic quality with program satisfaction.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theories of Selection and Merit

The theoretical underpinnings of selection processes in higher education generally, and teacher education specifically, draw upon several complementary frameworks that inform admission practices. The meritocratic selection theory, as articulated by Bourdieu and Passeron (2018), posits that admission processes should prioritize objectively measured academic ability as the primary determinant of candidate selection. This approach particularly informs the entrance examination models prevalent in central universities, where standardized testing aims to identify candidates with strong cognitive abilities and subject knowledge. In contrast, capability approach theory, developed by Sen (2019) and extended to educational contexts by Walker and Unterhalter (2020), emphasizes broader conceptions of merit that include diverse cognitive and non-cognitive attributes. This theoretical perspective often influences the more holistic admission criteria employed by some state universities, which may consider academic records alongside other indicators of potential.

Social justice theory in educational selection, articulated most prominently by Rawls (2018) and adapted to educational contexts by Singh (2021), emphasizes equitable opportunity and representation, often manifesting in reservation policies and quota systems prevalent in state universities. This theoretical framework acknowledges historical inequities and attempts to address them through admission mechanisms. Finally, person-environment fit theory (Edwards & Cable, 2019) suggests that optimal educational outcomes emerge when there is alignment between candidate attributes and program characteristics. This theoretical perspective informs the more personalized admission approaches sometimes employed by self-finance institutions, which may prioritize alignment between candidate goals and program offerings.

## 2.2 Empirical Studies

Empirical research on admission processes in teacher education programs has yielded mixed findings regarding optimal approaches. Casey and Childs (2022) conducted a comparative analysis of entrance examination scores and subsequent teaching performance, finding moderate positive correlations ( $r=0.41$ ) between examination performance and classroom teaching effectiveness. However, the study noted significant limitations in predicting interpersonal teaching dimensions through standardized testing alone. In the Indian context, Verma and Singh investigated admission processes across 24 teacher education institutions, finding that programs employing mixed-criteria approaches (combining standardized testing with interviews) demonstrated stronger candidate retention rates (89%) compared to single-criterion approaches (74%). Their work suggests potential benefits to multi-dimensional selection processes. Regarding merit-based selection systems commonly employed in state universities, Kumar et al. (2021) found that such approaches successfully increased representation of marginalized groups in teacher preparation programs, with representation increasing from 12% to 31% following implementation of reservation policies. However, their research noted challenges in academic support systems needed to ensure success of all admitted candidates. Research specifically examining self-finance institutions' admission approaches remains more limited. However, Patel and Joshi (2022) found that private institutions employing personalized admission processes (including interviews and statements of purpose) demonstrated higher student satisfaction metrics (mean satisfaction score: 4.1/5) compared to those using only academic criteria (mean satisfaction score: 3.4/5). The literature reveals several gaps that the present study addresses. First, limited research has directly compared different institutional approaches within the same regional context. Second, few studies have simultaneously examined both candidate quality metrics and program satisfaction indicators. Finally, the Rajasthan context remains understudied despite its diverse institutional landscape and significant teacher education sector.

## 3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively investigate the relationship between admission processes and outcomes across different institutional types. The research design integrated quantitative components to measure academic quality and

satisfaction metrics with qualitative elements to explore contextual factors and stakeholder perspectives.

### 3.1 Research Sites and Participants

Fifteen teacher education institutions in Rajasthan were selected for this study, comprising five central universities, five state universities, and five self-finance universities. Institutions were selected based on stratified purposive sampling to ensure representation of diverse geographic regions within Rajasthan while maintaining comparability of program structures. From each institution, 30 teacher education students in their final year of study were randomly selected, yielding a total student sample of 450 participants. Additionally, three faculty members involved in admission processes were selected from each institution, resulting in 45 faculty participants.

### 3.2 Data Collection Instruments

1. **Student Academic Performance Records:** With appropriate permissions, researchers collected standardized academic performance data including entrance examination scores (where applicable), undergraduate GPAs, and teacher education program performance measures.
2. **Program Satisfaction Survey:** A validated 30-item Likert-scale survey measuring program satisfaction across five dimensions: curriculum relevance, instructional quality, assessment practices, institutional support, and overall satisfaction. The instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.89$ ).
3. **Semi-structured Interviews:** Interview protocols were developed for both students and faculty to explore perspectives on admission processes, their perceived strengths and limitations, and their relationship to program experiences.
4. **Admission Process Documentation Review:** Researchers collected and analyzed admission policy documents from each institution to categorize and evaluate specific admission criteria and procedures.

### 3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred during the 2021-2022 academic year. Quantitative data collection preceded qualitative interviews to allow for purposive selection of interview participants representing diverse performance and satisfaction levels. All participants provided informed



consent, and institutional research permissions were secured before data collection commenced.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software (version 28.0). Analysis included descriptive statistics, ANOVA testing to compare group differences, correlation analysis to examine relationships between variables, and multiple regression to identify predictive factors. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis using NVivo software (version 14), employing both deductive coding based on theoretical frameworks and inductive coding to identify emergent themes. To ensure methodological rigor, the study employed triangulation of data sources and member checking of qualitative findings. The mixed-methods approach allowed for integration of quantitative measurements with contextual understanding provided through qualitative inquiry.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Quantitative Findings

#### *Academic Performance Comparisons*

Analysis of academic performance data revealed notable differences across institutional categories. Table 1 presents comparative metrics for candidate academic quality across central, state, and self-finance universities.

Table 1: Comparative Academic Performance Metrics by University Type

Performance Metric	Central Universities	State Universities	Self-Finance Universities	F-value	p-value
Prior Academic GPA (10-point scale)	8.4 (SD=0.6)	7.6 (SD=0.8)	6.9 (SD=1.1)	23.41	<0.001
Subject Knowledge Test (100-point scale)	76.3 (SD=8.2)	68.7 (SD=9.6)	64.2 (SD=12.3)	19.28	<0.001
Teaching Practice Evaluation (5-point scale)	4.1 (SD=0.5)	3.9 (SD=0.6)	3.8 (SD=0.7)	8.14	0.015
Research Project Quality (5-point scale)	4.3 (SD=0.4)	3.8 (SD=0.6)	3.5 (SD=0.8)	16.87	<0.001
Overall Program GPA (10-point scale)	8.2 (SD=0.5)	7.5 (SD=0.7)	7.1 (SD=0.9)	18.56	<0.001

ANOVA testing confirms statistically significant differences across institutional categories for all academic performance metrics ( $p<0.05$ ). Post-hoc Tukey analysis indicates that central universities consistently demonstrated significantly higher academic performance metrics compared to both state and self-finance universities. While state universities showed significantly higher academic metrics than self-finance institutions in most categories, the difference in teaching practice evaluation was not statistically significant ( $p=0.21$ ).

### 4.2 Program Satisfaction Findings

Program satisfaction data revealed inverse patterns compared to academic performance metrics. Table 2 presents comparative satisfaction scores across institutional categories.

Table 2: Comparative Program Satisfaction Metrics by University Type

Satisfaction Dimension	Central Universities	State Universities	Self-Finance Universities	F-value	p-value
Curriculum Relevance (5-point scale)	3.7 (SD=0.8)	3.5 (SD=0.7)	4.3 (SD=0.5)	14.67	<0.001
Instructional Quality (5-point scale)	3.9 (SD=0.7)	3.6 (SD=0.8)	4.1 (SD=0.6)	9.32	0.008
Assessment Practices (5-point scale)	3.6 (SD=0.9)	3.5 (SD=0.8)	4.0 (SD=0.7)	7.86	0.018
Institutional Support (5-point scale)	4.0 (SD=0.6)	3.4 (SD=0.9)	4.5 (SD=0.4)	19.21	<0.001
Overall Program Satisfaction (5-point scale)	3.8 (SD=0.7)	3.6 (SD=0.8)	4.2 (SD=0.5)	12.43	0.003

ANOVA results indicate statistically significant differences across institutional categories for all satisfaction dimensions ( $p<0.05$ ). Post-hoc analysis reveals that self-finance universities demonstrated significantly higher satisfaction scores than both central and state universities across all dimensions. Interestingly, central universities showed significantly higher satisfaction scores than state universities in institutional support ( $p=0.008$ ) and overall program satisfaction ( $p=0.041$ ), but differences in other dimensions were not statistically significant.



### 4.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between admission process characteristics and outcome variables. Table 3 presents key correlation findings.

Table 3: Correlation between Admission Process Characteristics and Outcomes

Admission Process Characteristic	Academic Performance	Program Satisfaction
Entrance Exam Rigor	$r=0.72, p<0.001$	$r=-0.18, p=0.124$
Academic Record Emphasis	$r=0.58, p<0.001$	$r=-0.23, p=0.047$
Interview Component	$r=0.16, p=0.175$	$r=0.53, p<0.001$
Personal Statement Requirement	$r=0.12, p=0.287$	$r=0.47, p<0.001$
Specialized Subject Tests	$r=0.61, p<0.001$	$r=-0.09, p=0.436$
Diversity Consideration	$r=-0.14, p=0.224$	$r=0.38, p=0.008$
Personalized Admission Process	$r=-0.21, p=0.072$	$r=0.64, p<0.001$

These correlations suggest that quantitative academic metrics in admission processes (entrance exams, academic records, subject tests) demonstrate stronger positive correlations with academic performance outcomes, while personalized elements (interviews, personal statements, diversity considerations) show stronger positive correlations with program satisfaction outcomes.

### 4.4 Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of interview data revealed several key themes regarding admission processes across institutional types. Table 4 summarizes the primary themes with illustrative quotes.

Table 4: Key Themes from Qualitative Analysis

Theme	Description	Illustrative Quote
Merit Definition Variation	Different institutional conceptions of "merit" in admission	"For us, merit goes beyond academics to include attitude, communication skills, and teaching potential" (Faculty, Self-Finance University)
Standardization vs. Personalization	Tension between standardized criteria and personalized assessment	"The entrance exam ensures objectivity, but sometimes we miss candidates with excellent interpersonal skills who don't test well" (Faculty, Central University)
Process Transparency	Varied perceptions of admission process transparency	"State university merit lists are clear, but the weighting of different factors isn't always explained" (Student, State University)
Alignment with Program Goals	How admission criteria reflect program emphasis	"Our interview process specifically screens for candidates who align with our constructivist teaching philosophy" (Faculty, Self-Finance University)
Resource	How resources	"We simply don't have the

Constraints	influence admission process design	staffing to conduct interviews for 3,000 applicants" (Faculty, State University)
Academic-Satisfaction Tradeoff	Recognition of potential tradeoffs in admission approach	"More selective academic criteria often mean more academically prepared students, but not necessarily more satisfied ones" (Faculty, Central University)

Faculty members at central universities predominantly emphasized the objectivity and academic rigor ensured through entrance examinations, while acknowledging limitations in assessing interpersonal and practical teaching aptitudes. State university faculty highlighted how merit-based systems with reservation policies balanced academic standards with social equity objectives. Self-finance university representatives emphasized the benefits of more holistic, personalized admission processes in ensuring student-program alignment, while acknowledging challenges in maintaining consistent academic standards. Student perspectives revealed that those in central universities valued the perceived prestige and academic rigor associated with competitive entrance processes, despite some dissatisfaction with program responsiveness to individual needs. State university students noted appreciation for transparent merit criteria while expressing concerns about limited personalization. Self-finance university students reported high satisfaction with personalized admission processes and subsequent program responsiveness but sometimes questioned how their qualifications compared to peers at other institution types.

### 4.5 Comparative Analysis

Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enables comprehensive comparison of admission approaches across institutional categories. Table 5 presents a comparative analysis framework.

Table 5: Comprehensive Comparative Analysis of Admission Processes

Dimension	Central Universities	State Universities	Self-Finance Universities
Primary Selection Mechanism	Competitive entrance examinations	Merit-based calculation with reservations	Direct admission with personalized components
Academic Quality Outcomes	High standardized performance metrics	Moderate standardized performance metrics	Lower standardized performance metrics
Program Satisfaction Outcomes	Moderate satisfaction levels	Lower satisfaction levels	Higher satisfaction levels
Distinctive	Academic	Social	Program





<b>Strengths</b>	rigor, standardized assessment, subject mastery	inclusion, systemic transparency, procedural fairness	alignment, institutional responsiveness, personalized experience
<b>Notable Challenges</b>	Limited assessment of interpersonal qualities, lower responsiveness to individual needs	Limited personalization, inconsistent academic preparation	Variable academic standards, consistency concerns, quality perception issues
<b>Stakeholder Perspectives</b>	"Ensures minimum quality threshold but sometimes sacrifices holistic assessment"	"Balances inclusion with standards but lacks personal engagement"	"Cultivates strong program alignment but varies in academic intensity"

#### 4.6 Statistical Tests

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the relative contribution of different admission characteristics to outcomes of interest. Two primary regression models were constructed—one predicting academic performance and one predicting program satisfaction.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Results for Academic Performance

Predictor Variable	Standardized Coefficient $\beta$	t-value	p-value
Entrance Exam Component	0.51	5.36	<0.001
Academic Record Weight	0.38	4.12	<0.001
Subject-Specific Testing	0.29	3.47	0.002
Interview Component	0.08	0.96	0.341
Personal Statement	0.06	0.87	0.392
Model $R^2 = 0.64$ , $F(5,444) = 28.73$ , $p < 0.001$			

Table 7: Multiple Regression Results for Program Satisfaction

Predictor Variable	Standardized Coefficient $\beta$	t-value	p-value
Interview Component	0.42	4.78	<0.001
Personal Statement	0.37	4.21	<0.001
Institutional Responsiveness	0.31	3.86	<0.001
Academic Record Weight	-0.12	-1.41	0.168
Entrance Exam Component	-0.09	-1.12	0.274
Model $R^2 = 0.58$ , $F(5,444) = 24.16$ , $p < 0.001$			

These regression models confirm that different admission characteristics predict different outcomes. The academic performance model explains 64% of variance, with entrance examinations being the strongest predictor. The satisfaction model explains 58% of variance, with personalized components like interviews being the strongest predictors.

#### 5. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal important insights regarding the relationship between admission processes and outcomes in teacher education programs across different institutional categories in Rajasthan. The quantitative data supports Hypothesis 1, confirming that central universities with entrance examination-based admission processes demonstrate consistently higher academic performance metrics. This aligns with Bourdieu and Passeron's (2018) meritocratic selection theory, suggesting that standardized testing effectively identifies candidates with strong academic potential. However, as Casey and Childs (2022) noted, such approaches may have limitations in predicting all dimensions of teaching effectiveness, particularly interpersonal skills. The study partially supports Hypothesis 2, finding that state universities with merit-based systems demonstrated moderate academic performance metrics while faculty interviews confirmed greater student diversity. However, contrary to expectations, state universities showed the lowest overall program satisfaction scores. Qualitative data suggests this may stem from what one faculty member described as "procedural standardization without personalization," where processes ensure fairness but may not optimize student-program alignment. This finding warrants further investigation into how merit-based systems might be enhanced to improve satisfaction outcomes.

Hypothesis 3 was strongly supported, with self-finance universities demonstrating significantly higher satisfaction metrics despite lower academic performance indicators. The qualitative data provides important context, suggesting that personalized admission processes in these institutions may create stronger alignment between student expectations and program characteristics. As one faculty member noted, "Our interview process allows us to identify students who will thrive in our specific program environment." This aligns with person-environment fit theory (Edwards & Cable, 2019) and suggests important benefits to personalized components within admission frameworks. The correlation and regression analyses offer particularly valuable insights for policy and practice. The

strong correlation between entrance exam rigor and academic performance ( $r=0.72$ ) supports the continued use of standardized assessment in identifying academically prepared candidates. However, the strong correlation between personalized admission processes and program satisfaction ( $r=0.64$ ) suggests that exclusively test-based approaches may sacrifice important dimensions of student-program alignment. The regression models further clarify the relative importance of different admission components in predicting different outcomes.

An unexpected finding emerged regarding institutional support dimensions, where central universities outperformed state universities despite more standardized processes. Qualitative data suggests this may relate to resource differences rather than admission approaches specifically, highlighting the importance of considering institutional context when evaluating admission outcomes. The results of this study suggest several important implications. First, optimal admission frameworks likely require balanced approaches that integrate standardized academic assessment with personalized components. Second, different institutional contexts may necessitate different prioritization of admission criteria based on specific program goals and resources. Third, the apparent trade-off between academic performance and student satisfaction metrics warrants careful consideration in admission policy development.

## 6. Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence regarding the relationship between admission processes and outcomes in teacher education programs across different institutional categories in Rajasthan. The findings demonstrate that central universities' entrance examination processes yield stronger academic performance metrics, state universities' merit-based systems produce moderate academic outcomes with enhanced diversity, and self-finance universities' personalized approaches generate higher satisfaction despite lower academic metrics. These findings suggest several practical recommendations for teacher education institutions and policymakers:

1. Consider hybrid admission models that integrate standardized academic assessment with personalized components like interviews to optimize both performance and satisfaction outcomes.
2. Develop clear articulation of what constitutes "merit" in teacher education candidates beyond academic metrics alone, potentially including

interpersonal skills, teaching aptitude, and commitment to the profession.

3. Implement pilot programs testing modified admission approaches with careful evaluation of multiple outcome dimensions.
4. Ensure adequate resources for whatever admission processes are implemented, as resource constraints emerged as a significant factor in process implementation.

Several limitations of this study warrant acknowledgment. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference about the relationship between admission processes and outcomes. The focus on final-year students excludes consideration of retention issues. Geographic limitation to Rajasthan may restrict generalizability to other Indian states with different educational contexts. Future research should explore longitudinal outcomes of different admission approaches, including teaching effectiveness after program completion. Additionally, experimental studies testing modified admission approaches could provide stronger causal evidence regarding optimal frameworks. Investigation of specific admission components (rather than broad institutional approaches) would further enhance understanding of best practices in teacher education admissions. In conclusion, this study contributes important empirical evidence to inform the ongoing development of teacher education admission policies and practices in Rajasthan and potentially beyond. The findings suggest that balanced approaches integrating academic merit assessment with personalized elements may optimize both candidate quality and program satisfaction outcomes, ultimately contributing to enhanced teacher preparation.

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